The Catalyst

The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks

Spring 1998 **Volume 3 No. 1**

What the Forest Means to Me

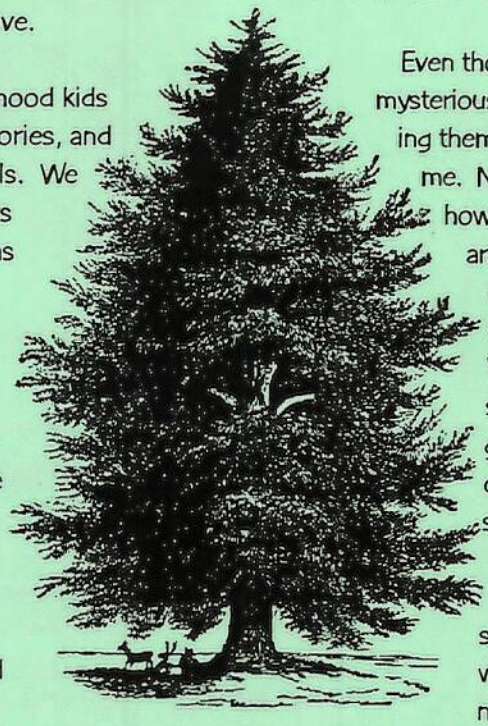
By Kriston Fenstermaker
Forestry Student

As a child, the forest which we lovingly called "the woods" was a place of learning. It was an outdoor classroom where I learned about the delicate nature of life and death. It was a dark, cool haven from parents and chores, where wild animals roamed free and wild onions and mud pies were all we needed to survive.

The woods were where the neighborhood kids built forts to protect their hard-won territories, and acorn fights solved all our childish quarrels. We discovered the joys of fishing for minnows with bread balls, and under every rock was a treasure of worms and lizards.

Our local park and visitor center was a wonderful treat. My father taught me to walk quietly along the trails so that we might see the deer or rabbit that could be feeding around the bend, and if we were lucky we got to stay up late and watch the ranger's weekend night programs.

Today I don't build forts or make mud pies, but I still go to forests. They seem different now, not as big and not as wild. I know the names of a majority of the trees, and I recognize different communities and management techniques.



Today forests are still a classroom, but the stakes are higher. I choose to study forestry, because I love the forest . . . and the streams, and the meadows, and the wetlands. I want to know how nature grows and develops, and how I can influence and improve it.

Even though "the woods" aren't as free and mysterious as when I was a child, understanding them makes them even more important to me. Now I know what forests bring to us, how they affect people and the world around us. I have come to understand that forests were here before us and will be here long after we are gone. When they are disturbed or destroyed, they can be repaired and grow again. Forests are continuously changing and that can never be stopped.

Now I hope to make a living sharing what I know about nature with others. In establishing a nurturing attitude for forests in others, I will be protecting them not only for me to enjoy, but also for my children. Then, once again "the woods" will be filled with wild creatures, forts, and mud pies.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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Contributor's Guidelines

Catalyst welcomes your original articles of any length! Or, send copies of stories published elsewhere that you think our readers will appreciate. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time.

We **really** appreciate articles submitted on disk or by e-mail. We can read most formats of DOS/Windows disks. Printed manuscripts, facsimile or phone messages are also accepted. Please advise if you would like your diskette returned, otherwise we will recycle it in our office to save postage.

Illustrations are strongly encouraged. Drawings, graphs or other illustrations may be submitted on disk or hard copy. Black & white glossy photos are preferred; color prints or slides sometimes work. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly.

"The essence is to travel gracefully rather than to arrive."
— Enos Mills

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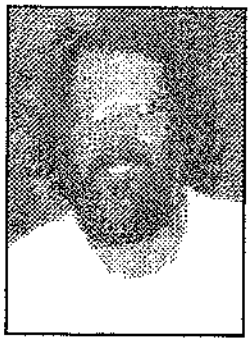
From the Editor



It has been a long, tough winter in many of our parks, thanks to El Niño. We hope you can take time from digging out and drying out to enjoy this issue of *Catalyst.*

Out cover article was written by Kriston Fenstermaker. She is a student of Forestry at Steven F. Austin State University. Her instructor, Dr. Michael Legg, has had many students write papers for his classes on nature centers or parks that have affected the students' lives. This one tells Mike we have all done our jobs well at least some of the time. He says, "It is papers like this one that encourage me to stay in the profession and keep trying to instill or encourage this type of attitude about natural resources."

You will be excited to hear about the new Litter-Getter Program on page 6. John Werminski fills us in on all the details. You can reach John at (916) 653-8959.

You will find the latest on State Park Month and how it will focus on the Sesquicentennial all on page 7. It was written by Linda McDonald of the Park Services Interpretation Section who would love to hear from you at (916) 653-0768.

A lot of folks are thinking about buying a digital camera these days. You'll find one man's opinion on that subject on page 10. If you've already got a digital camera, why don't you send us a picture and a few comments? We will publish them in a future issue.

From Empire Mine SHP we bring you "There Must be a Pony in Here Somewhere." Donna Rea Jones, Interpreter I, tells about an ambitious artifact inventory and catalog project. And from San Clemente SB comes a report on their coastal cleanup day. Maybe there's an idea here that you can use. It was written by Winter Bonnin, Interpretive Specialist. Team Silverwood is back again in this issue to tell us about "A School and Park Partnership."

How would you like to polish your naturalist skills for a week at the Audubon Camp in the Rockies? Scholarships are available now. On page 13 you can see what Christine Revelas says about her trip last year. Christina can be reached at (408)649-7118.

Wayne Breece takes a close look at the NPS interpretive program in "The Value of Interpretation." Wayne, who recently left the Department after many years as an interpreter, had written and submitted this article after visiting Yellowstone on his vacation. He recently transferred to PERS where he uses his interpretive talents as a training officer. Wayne hopes to return to DPR someday, in the meantime he can be reached at (916) 658-1278.

Linda McDonald reports current issues in accessibility from the National Interpreters Workshop. More photos of the workshop follow on page 18.

In the latest California's Tapestry Jack Shu asks us to consider "Using the Appropriate Words." Jack works in the office of Community Involvement and can be reached at (619) 220-5330.

Its always great to hear from folks and know that someone out there is actually reading this. If you have any thoughts or comments about *Catalyst* I'd love to hear from you. Thanks for reading. Now get out there and interpret something!

Brian Cahill, Editor

What's Up?

Interpreters' Resources

National Interpreters Workshop

You won't want to miss the 1998 National Interpreters Workshop! Absolutely the best interpretive training anywhere! October 20 - 24 in Anchorage, Alaska. (888) 900-8283.

Storytelling Workshop

Presented by Susan Strauss, who is internationally known for her work as a storyteller and natural history educator. June 24 - 28 at the Waldorf School of Bend, Oregon. Registration is $450 and includes all meals. (888)778-7970

Invertebrates in Captivity Conference

All aboout exhibiting, conserving and using invertebrates in natural history education. July 28 - August 2, 1998. For information call (520) 883-3945.

Managing Museums More Effectively

The 1998 Museum Management Program at the University of Colorado at Boulder will be held June 28 - July 2. For information call (303) 473-9150.

Hanta Virus & Lyme Disease

Dr. James Lang presents his latest results on August 27 at San Diego's Natural History Museum. (619) 232-3821 x 203.

Audubon Ecology Workshop

Scholarships are available for you this summer! See info on page 13.

Volunteers in Parks Program Guidelines

The long awaited *Volunteers In Parks Program Guidelines* are out! An initial distribution to superintendents, volunteer coordinators and district administrative officers has been completed. So far, the binder full of volunteer policies, procedures, facts and forms is being well received. If you are managing a volunteer program in State Parks, you too will want to have the latest information at your fingertips. Copies are available by contacting the Department's Volunteer Programs Manager, Heather Fargo, at (916) 653-8819.

Museum Store Management

Here's expert advice on running a small sales operation in an educational institutution, like a museum or park. Finances, inventory, merchandising and much more in a small, easy-to-read book. $24.95 (and worth every penny). To order call (805) 499-9774.

Common Names of Insects

The Entomological Society of America introduces a comprehensive guide to common names of insects and related organisms. For information or orders call (301) 731-4535.

Sharing Nature with Children

This classic book on children's interpretation is now newly revised and expanded as it celebrates its 20th anniversary. Only $7.95 from Dawn Publications (800) 545-7475.

New Source for Native American Music, Books and Videos

Check out what's offered by Four Winds Trading Company at http://fourwinds-trading.com or call (800) 456-5444.

Dandelions Rule!

The Defenders of Dandelions is an organization that swears by its motto: "Celebrate dandelions: If you can't beat 'em, eat 'em." Their newsletter ($15) is full of recipes, articles and much more. Contact petergail@aol.com

Volunteers & Liability

This subject could really save your bacon! Get down to your library and look up the *School Law Bulletin*. Starting with the spring 1997 issue you will find a 4-part series titled "Legal Issues in School Volunteer Programs." Even though their focus is on schools and North Carolina laws, you will still find a whole lot that applies to what we do.

InterpWORLD Express

This FREE electronic newsletter is already going to over 800 interpreters world-wide. If you have an E-mail account it should be going to you, too! It is provided as a service of the International Society for the Advancement of Interpretive Communications, but you don't have to join or pay anything to get it. Just send your name and E-mail address to jvainterp@aol.com

Dear Master Interpreter

Dear Master Interpreter,

We are revising and improving our self-guided nature trail to conform to the guidelines for self-guided nature trails as outlined by Sam Ham, John Werminski and all those guys. We asked our natural history association for $700 for a new sign at the top of the trail (in the standard interp. kiosk that is already there). They thought that was a lot of money, and said they'd try to get the high school kids to make a sign for us in wood shop. How do we get them to understand the importance of a professional-quality sign, and why it is inappropriate for the high school kids to make us a sign?

Signless

Dear Signless,

Wow, that's a tough one. I'm sure you want to maintain good relations with your NHA so you'll have to be tactful. Start by explaining the features you need in that panel, perhaps things like strong design, readability, durability, interpretive value etc. Don't focus on who makes it, just on what it needs to do.

Second, how critical is your $700 price? Can you find any way to bring your budget down a bit to acknowledge your association's concerns while still getting a professional product? We are in the midst of exciting new advances in the digital production of wayside panels that make them better, cheaper and faster to manufacture than ever before. Talk to your Interpretive Specialist.

Finally, be patient. I know you can be very persuasive; eventually they will come around to your way of thinking.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

I've got a good program, but I want to give it just a little more punch. What can I do to really WOW my audience?

Looking for Zip

Dear Zippy,

Take another look at your conclusion. Does it restate your theme? (Hopefully with a flourish!) Very important (and surprisingly often overlooked) is what you say after the big finish. How often have you heard a powerful concluding statement, strong enough to give you a tingle, and then heard the presenter babble on about thank-you-for-coming-I-hope-you-enjoy-your-stay-at-brand-X-State-Park-Don't-forget-tomorrow's-nature-walk-at-nine-and-does-anyone-have-any-questions. . . while the magic fades away. Just move all that stuff to a different part of your presentation. Then, give your big finish and shut up. Wait a moment and add a "thank you" or "good night," but stop yourself at two words. You'll be surprised at how much more powerful your program will be if you end it like that.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

I get real tired of telling people that I'm an interpreter and having them ask what language I speak. Why can't we just call ourselves naturalists?

Tired

Dear Tired,

This conundrum has been around as long as this profession, and there are no easy answers. Interpreter is a much more inclusive word than naturalist and it really gets to exactly what it is that we do. One thing that helps a bit is to add an adjective. Tell folks that you are a park interpreter or a museum interpreter and maybe a few more will catch on.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

Can you believe a park visitor actually brought a chicken into our visitor center? We have rules about dogs in the building but I couldn't find anything about chickens so I let them stay!

Seen Everything

Litter-Getter Update

By John Werminski
S.P. Interpreter II

Last summer's *Catalyst* included an announcement that the Interpretation Section would be renovating the Department's Litter-Getter program. With grant funding from the Departrnent of Conservation, it became possible for Headquariers to act on long-standing field requests for Litter-Getter program support. The *Catalyst* article asked for field input on the project, and some was received. Now, newly-designed materials are being produced, and these will be arriving at park district offices this spring. Here's a preview of coming attractions:

Children interested in participating in Litter-Getters will each be given a full-color brochure. The brochure contains kids' activities, information about why litter doesn't belong in parks, and poster-like artwork showing "nature's recyclers." It also has places for six colorful stickers that depict the official state tree, flower, bird, reptile, marine mammal, and insect. The stickers will be used as incentives, with one awarded for every bag of litter turned in. To reinforce the recycling theme, children who collect all six stickers will be given a pencil made of recycled denim or U.S. currency. Also, a trash bag imprinted with a Litter-Getter graphic will be issued with the brochure, along with a latex glove to keep things sanitary.

More detailed instructions will be provided to district interpretive coordinators when the supplies are shipped to them. All materials should reach the field wl in advance of the summer season.

Anyone with questions can contact John Werminski at (916) 653-8959.

WANT TO BECOME A LITTER-GETTER? HERE'S HOW:

- **Ask a ranger or other park person for a litter bag and instructions.**
- **Collect the loose trash that you find in the park – soda cans, scraps of paper, cigarette butts, etc.**
- **Show a park person your filled litter bag...and receive a sticker for helping keep our State Parks clean!**
- **Place your sticker in the spot for it above. Try to collect all six. If you do, you'll be a TRUE LITTER-GETTER!**

Discover California State Parks

Strike it Rich

By Linda McDonald
S.P. Interpreter II

The State Parks Month Committee has been busy preparing for the fifth annual State Parks Month promotion. The Interpretation Section of Park Services is leading the efforts with major support from the Office of Marketing and Revenue Generation. The committee membership represents a broad cross-section of the Department - Park Stewardship, RMD, OHV, Concessions, and the League of Cooperating Associations. In its planning process, the committee incorporated field input in order to make the promotion as beneficial as possible for the entire Department.

This year State Parks Month is focused on the Sesquicentennial. The slogan, "**Strike it Rich, Discover California State Parks**" highlights the rich experiences available in state parks. While the slogan is based on a historic theme, it also reflects the rich natural resources preserved in state parks. By walking a nature trail, exploring a historic building, or contemplating the power of the ocean surf, visitors enrich their lives in park environments.

In observance of State Parks Month, admission will be free on the first Monday in May for normal day use fees. Visitors are encouraged to take this opportunity to explore their nearest state park or to visit a park they have never seen. Free admission reminds the public that parks belong to people. It is also an important feature that the media will want to pass along to readers and viewers. Due to special considerations, Hearst Castle™, Angel Island, the California State Railroad Museum, and Año Nuevo tours will continue to charge fees that day.

California State Parks has been called "The Heart and Soul of the Sesquicentennial." That's because so much of the history that took place 150 years ago actually occurred on what is now state park property. From the Bear Flag Revolt of 1846, through the gold discovery of 1848, the gold rush of 1849, and California's statehood in 1850, today's state parks preserve many of the most significant historic sites in our state. Events from these historic years took place at what are today state historic parks such as Sutter's Fort, Sonoma, Marshall Gold Discovery, Monterey, Benicia, and the State Capitol Museum.

Visitors have a new opportunity to explore California through the California 150 Passport program. Passports go on sale this spring and include 150 sites throughout California. When visitors arrive at each location, their passport is stamped with a unique image to commemorative the visit. In addition, the passports are filled with information about the sites, which include state and national parks, forest service areas, museums and visitor centers.

CALIFORNIA
150
STATE PARK
HISTORIC SITES
1846-1847

Governor Pete Wilson is expected to sign a proclamation declaring May State Parks Month. This is an opportunity to draw public attention to the role of parks in the quality of life in California. Parks enhance people's lives through recreation, education and contact with the natural environment. They also preserve California's most valuable natural and cultural resources for the generations to come.

Promotion of State Parks Month will include a poster designed by award-winning artist Audi Stanton. The poster will be distributed to park units for use in promoting events and public awareness. In addition, merchandise featuring the "Strike it Rich" slogan will be available in early April for sale through concessionaires and/or cooperating associations. For more information about merchandise, contact Laura Wagner at (916) 653-2163 or Calnet 453-2163.

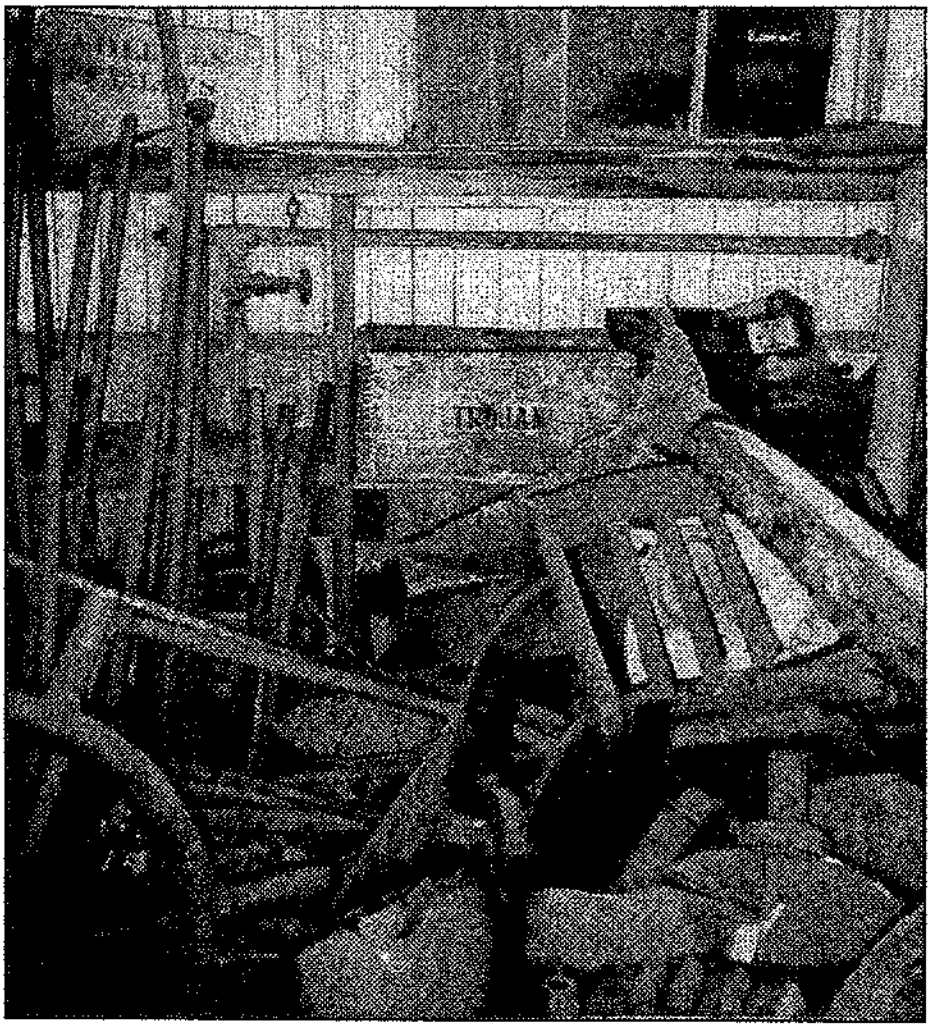
Throughout the state there will be special events in the month of May that highlight the amazing diversity of natural and cultural resources in California State Parks. The State Parks Month Committee's goal is to provide a service to field units by promoting events statewide, providing promotional materials, making sales items available and raising public awareness. If you have any questions or comments about State Parks Month, contact Linda McDonald in the Interpretation Section at (916) 653-0768, Calnet 453-0768.

"There Must Be A Pony In Here Somewhere..."

By Donna Rea Jones
S.P. Interpreter I

In the long years of budget cuts, many things have lain neglected. Recently, through the Department's Performance Based Budgeting process, some moneys were redirected to fund a large, one-time effort to inventory and catalog collections at Gold Rush era parks. Armed with a portion of those monies, a small team of enthusiasts (four park aids and a Ranger) launched into an ambitious project: inventory and catalog the entire museum collection at Empire Mine SHP. Nine months and 15,000-plus artifacts later, 95% of the collection is catalogued and inventoried. What an adventure!

Most folks envision museum workers as immaculate people in crisp lab coats and white cotton gloves, painstakingly conserving priceless, fragile antiquities. In our world of mining gear and equipment still coated with authentic historic grease, our costumes evolved to match our subjects. We worked with pure intentions, but our lab coats soon morphed to overalls. We often abandoned those white cotton gloves (to protect the artifacts) in favor of leather work gloves (to protect us from artifacts). Pest management took on a personal flavor when panicked bats flew out in our faces, startled rats abandoned their nests in dynamite boxes, and stray cats sometimes marked the same objects we did. Indiana Jones would be right at home.



This is a "before" look at the storage area full of mining gear and equipment still coated with authentic historic grease and dust.

It is an optimist's job; there are treasures everywhere. Under the patina of dust and rust, we found poignant reminders of the men who had worked here. In an old stokes litter, we uncovered boxes of first aid supplies, circa 1930, still untouched in the original wrappers. In a box of catalogs, we found the operating manual to the original ore crusher, circa 1898, which just happens to be sitting behind the blacksmith shop. It was common to find an obscure metal object with a tag identifying it as, say, a part to the hoist on the 4600 ft. level, still laying on the shelf where it was tossed in 1948. The daily question became "What is it?" Volunteer Dick Monedero, a retired machinist, offered invaluable information. Volunteer Russ Hadel often knew where things came from and when, and even how they once worked.

In attics and basements, junk piles and storage sheds, every day yielded some new discovery. Old mine sites aren't clean, and Empire is no exception. rusting cans of uniden-

tified goo, bottles of toxic chemicals, and several stashes of radioactive mineral samples often delayed or redirected our efforts. Safety comes first; basic rules are "DON'T OPEN IT, DON'T SNIFF IT, and if in doubt, ASK." One of the unexpected benefits, in fact, is a complete list of hazardous materials that will be removed by contract later this year.

Not all were massive, iron machines. In the attic we found several hundred beautiful, hand drawn maps with colored illustrations of hoistworks and surface features, underground tunnels and mineral veins. The maps were often still gently tied with cotton gauze, unrolled since the engineers had stored them over 50 years ago. Forgotten letters awaited us in drawers. When it occasionally felt a little overwhelming, the universe provided comic relief. One day, I received an envelope from the United States Postal Service, Cincinnati, Ohio, "Loose-In-Mail Section." It was addressed to Mr. E. Brokenshire, Empire Star Mines Co. Ltd, Grass Valley, Calif. I know that Ernie Brokenshire had been a supervisor underground in the 1940s and 50s. When I opened it, it was an offer for a "Complimentary Copy of Mining World's 1960 Catalog, Survey & Directory Number with an introductory subscription to Mining World." Oh boy, historic Junk Mail!!

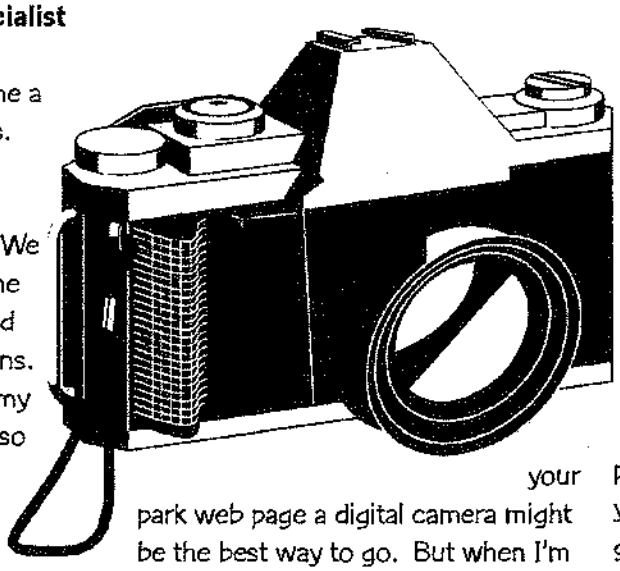
In the end, we learned a great deal. Now we have a baseline from which to plan better care of the collection. From retorts and cyanide cans to a fragile, illustrated map from 1858, the cultural resource here is fascinating, diverse, and often in need of attention. This year, we have undertaken the same project at Malakoff Diggins. Harness straps and hydraulic monitor parts, buggy wheels and ram pumps are already sporting fresh numbers and a little less dust. Bear scat greets us in the mornings, and fresh apples dangle from the old trees. Who knows what treasures await? But I'm sure we're having more fun than the folks at the Smithsonian. Their wildlife is all stuffed!

In attics and basements, junk piles and storage sheds, every day yielded some new discovery for Park Aids Lisa Kinney and Karen Knox. Old mine sites aren't clean, and Empire is no exception. Rusting cans of unidentified goo, bottles of toxic chemicals, and several stashes of radioactive mineral samples often delayed or redirected our efforts.

Why Wait Any Longer?

Is it Time to Buy a Digital Camera?

By Brian Cahill
District Interpretive Specialist



Digital cameras have come a long way in the last few years. As soon as the price started dropping below $500 the pressure was on to get one. We need digital photos all the time for publications, web sites and other interpretive presentations. So why am I still waiting for my 35mm film to get processed so I can turn around and scan pictures before I can use them?

Maybe it's different in your district, but in mine there's not a lot of money available for high-tech interpretive gizmos. Sure, some of the digital cameras are cheap enough that we could scrounge up the money somewhere, and I know we'd have fun with it if we had one. But I also know if we can just wait one more year they will be much better and a whole lot cheaper.

When it comes to picture quality the pictures from a $500 digital camera are noticeably inferior to those from a $10 single-use film camera. Sometimes a digital image is grainy or the color is a bit odd. One writer called digital cameras "the Polaroid cameras of the 90s. Sure, the pictures are fuzzy and the camera costs a pretty penny, but they offer instant gratification."

A lot depends on where the pictures are going to be used. If you are looking for a few quick shots for your park web page a digital camera might be the best way to go. But when I'm looking for a shot for the cover of the park newspaper that will be enlarged to 8 or 10 inches and printed in full color, I need a sharp Kodachrome transparancy, professionally scanned on a high-end drum scanner.

If you are thinking about going ahead and buying a digital camera, here are a few points to ponder:

Features

You don't need to be a techie nerd to know what features you want. Look for the same features you would want in a standard camera: zoom lens, autofocus and a built-in flash. Of course, a glass lens is better than a plastic lens.

Resolution

The bottom line is that more pixels are better. The number of pixels is a measure of the photo's resolution. If you want pictures larger than a postage stamp, buy a camera with at least 1024 x 768 pixels. When it comes to digital cameras they have a sneaky way of counting pixels, one per color instead of one per data point. The real resolution is actually one-third of what they claim especially if you are comparing resolution with a scanner or monitor. They just count differently than the rest of the computer industry.

Storage

Some digital cameras store your pictures in built-in memory. When you fill that memory up it is time to go back to your computer and download what you shot. Others have solid state removable memory modules that allow you to pop in a new one (if you can afford one) and keep shooting. The one that I'm watching actually uses standard 3½" floppy disks. With as many floppies as I have lying around, I will be shooting till the cows come home!

Batteries

I think I'll watch for rechargeable batteries. Digital cameras go through batteries faster than any Walkman. You can bet this is something they are working on in the research labs. Current digital cameras go through batteries like regular cameras go through film!

So what's the bottom line? If you are ready to buy a digital camera I probably still have not talked you out of it. So go ahead, have fun with it. Tell us **all** what you learn. In another year or two the rest of us will buy our first digital cameras and we'd love to learn from your experience.

Keep Those Beaches Clean

By Winter Bonnin
Interpretive Specialist
San Clemente State Beach

California Coastal Cleanup Day 1997 was going to be big this year! It was the 13th annual cleanup sponsored by the California Coastal Commission and the first year that Vicki Wiker and I were Interpretive Specialists at San Clemente State Beach. We wanted to do something special to mark both these milestones, something that would set a precedent for coastal cleanup days in the future.

Our plan was to combine the cleanup with an after party, a sort of coastal conservation celebration. We began calling local environmental organizations and aquatic recreation vendors in mid-July inquiring as to who might be interested in setting up a booth at our environmental fair on September 20. Although we had two months to plan, it seemed to make sense to start early. Once the Surfrider Foundation jumped aboard, it teamed up with REI and before we knew it our microcosmic idea had sponsors, and had expanded into a multi-organizational event! That's when it got a little scary. How many people were we expecting? We had no idea! REI's role was to promote a raffle or "opportunity drawing" (the 90s term) and it managed to procure nearly $4000.00 worth of prizes.

Local merchants also rallied to the cause and donated items such as T-shirts, hats, surfboard leashes, a deep-sea fishing trip, and even a $300.00 certificate toward a wetsuit. Furthermore, we got bagels, donuts, coffee, and bottled water. We even got a disposal service to provide cardboard recycling boxes so that we were truly in sync with the spirit of the day. It all came together perfectly.

September 20 arrived and Vicki and I along with REI's slew of volunteers arrived at San Clemente State Beach's campfire center at 6:00 A.M. Anxious participants began trickling in about 7:45 and we bombarded them with bags, gloves, data information cards, and — a raffle ticket. Everyone who participated in the beach cleanup was automatically entered into the raffle. The catch, however, was that they had to be present at 11:30 in order to be eligible to win a prize.

The cleanup went great. Between three sites along San Clemente beaches we had nearly 325 volunteers and collected mountains of trash and recyclables. At San Clemente State Beach alone, we weighed more than 200 pounds of trash and almost 300 pounds of bagged recyclables. Most people reported finding an inordinate amount of cigarette butts, as well as plastics, broken glass, and styrofoam. A couple of high school students went one better and foraged in the canyons leading down to the beach. They expressed surprise at how much trash they found and proudly displayed their most unusual item . . . a bra. Others wondered how people could be so inconsiderate to use the sand as an ashtray. Everyone wondered how people could leave trash behind without considering the consequences to marine animals and humans alike.

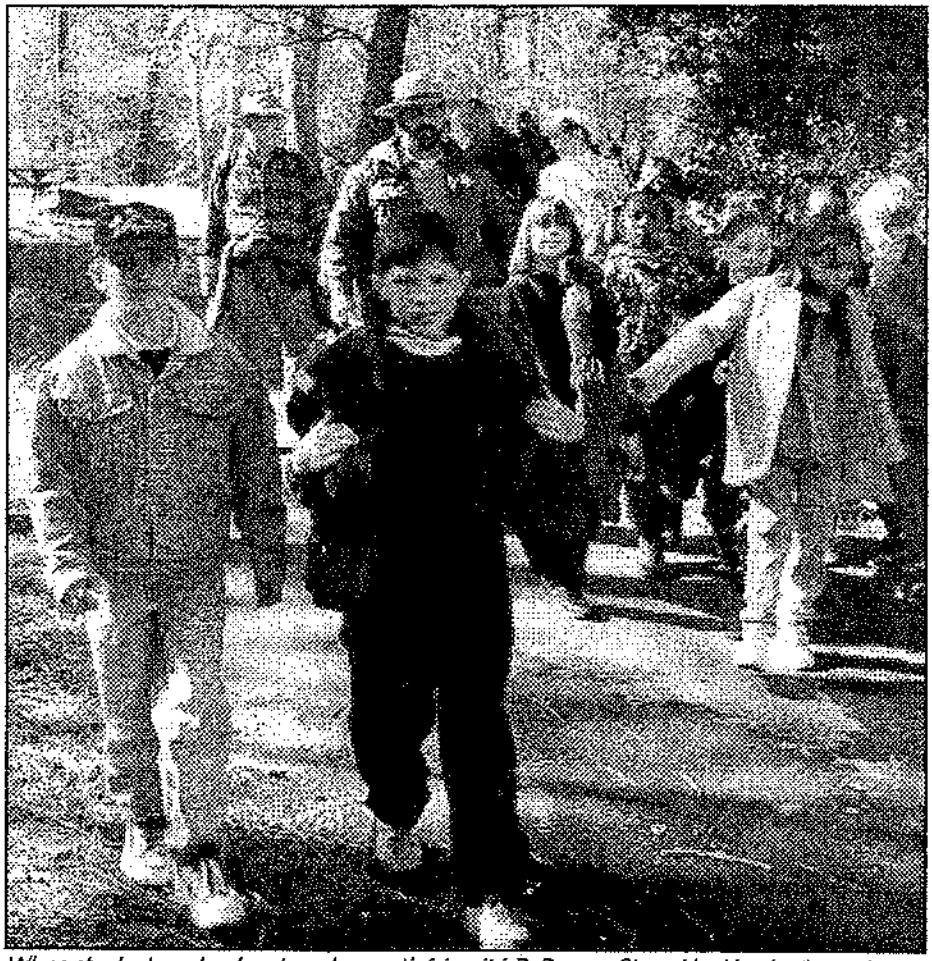
Volunteers arrived at San Clemente State Park and we bombarded them with bags, gloves, data information cards, and — a raffle ticket.

Ultimately, our event was a success and we learned a few valuable lessons. Our park stands alone, without shops, restaurants, or other attractions. Because of this, people came specifically to the cleanup and then left. We had scheduled the party from 11 A.M.— 5 P.M. expecting that people would stay for the environmental fair, interpretive activities, and live music. Unfortunately, after the raffle the masses left with only a handful of people coming and going throughout the remainder of the day. Needless to say, on coastal cleanup day '98 we will arrange for the festivities to be simultaneous. Our 1st annual "Coastal Conservation Celebration" paved the way for future events at the park, and increased community awareness about important environmental issues. For in the end, "we will conserve only what we love, and we will love only what we understand."

A School and Park Partnership

By Team Silverwood

Adopt-A-School? State Park Ranger Mary Pass of Benicia SHP and SRA first gave us the idea at Continuing Interpretation Training at Mott. She encouraged us to choose a school close to the park and establish a partnership with it. Mary said it was good to have the school children visit the park and then have rangers visit the school. We are now in the second year of the program and have "adopted" two schools. The program is a hit and very easy to put together. Here's how we did it.



Why not adopt a school and see how satisfying it is? Ranger Steve Hopkins leads a nature walk for students of Desert Knolls School.

The first school we adopted was from Apple Valley, a school nearby that had taken many field trips to Silverwood Lake. During the summer, we sent an introductory letter about the program to the school principal. Two park rangers went to the school and met the staff. A tentative schedule was set. We decided we would adopt the second graders.

In October, two rangers went to the school and did a presentation and slide show about California State Parks and animal habitats of Silverwood Lake. They talked about the "Adopt-A-School" program. At the conclusion of the talk, the rangers encouraged the children to write letters with more questions about the park. The children did write and the rangers did respond. Each student also received a packet which included a Ranger Buddy sticker, a Silverwood Lake Kid's Discovery book, Silverwood free map and a California Escapes guide.

In December, two different rangers did a presentation at the school about bald eagles. The children, split in groups, did various activities.

The following month, the students visited the park. We had three stations for the students; bald eagle viewing, nature hike and animal tracking. The students were in groups of 20 to 30. They were at each station for about 40 minutes. We had the three activities close by so we didn't lose time from traveling. Also, we planned the activities near a restroom.

A few weeks later, we received more letters. We put the letters in a binder, making them easily accessible and portable.

In February, two rangers went to the school and did a talk about orienteering. Students learned how to use a compass and how to properly pack a backpack. We wrapped up the program with another field trip in May for the second grade classes

that had not yet been to the park. We used the same format. Our three stations were about water safety (we took each group for a boat ride on our maintenance barge), orienteering and campground safety (we pitched tents, built a safe campfire and roasted marshmallows).

After summer, we wrote another proposal to the same school to see if they wanted to do the program again. they gladly accepted. Last week, two rangers visited the school and did the first program about California State Parks and animal habitats. Next month, the students will visit Silverwood Lake.

This year we decided to "adopt" a second school. We chose a school also close by but south of the park, near San Bernardino. We met with the teachers in September. The school staff decided to involve first through fourth graders. Last month we did a program about orienteering and campground safety for the fourth graders at their school. Last week the students visited the park.

In January we will begin working with the third graders. Our topic will be bald eagles. For the second graders we'll talk about water conservation. We will finish the school year with a program for the first graders about California State Parks and habitats.

We encourage you to "adopt" a school and see how satisfying it can be for both the students and park staff.

Attend National Audubon Ecology Workshop in The Rockies

Scully Scholarship

By Christine Revelas
Guide, Monterey SHP

It you've ever wanted to experience the old west, the Audubon Ecology Workshop in the Rockies is for you. Located in Torrey Valley, in the heart of Wyoming's Wind River mountain range, the workshop nuzzles Torrey Creek in a glaciated valley with three moraine lakes.

The program emphasized the interrelationships of wildlife, plants, soil and water, the need for their conservation and the relation between human progress and their intelligent treatment and wise use. Teaching and leadership techniques were also stressed.

Each day participants chose from a variety of classes – petroglyphs, geology, aquatic biology, mammal and bird observation, botany and water conservation classes. Hikes in and around Torrey Valley were always available for those who wished to investigate nature independently.

A one day field trip into the Grand Teton National Park complete with hiking, museums and a float trip on the Snake River was a day to remember. Evenings held more program options - campfires, guest speakers, volleyball and canoeing. Days were full from early morning birding to star gazing. Our companions were big horn sheep, eagles, osprey, beaver, moose and wapiti. And our only problem was the mosquito.

The National Audubon Society offers the Scully Scholarship to park rangers and interpreters in California. This full scholarship covers meals, lodging and instruction at the Ecology Workshop in the Rockies.

This year, Angy Nowicki, Ranger I at China Camp State Park, and Christine Revelas, Guide at Monterey State Historic Park, were the Scully Scholarship recipients. Both were honored to attend and both had a wonderful and re-energizing time.

The Scully Scholarship is available to you. Send a letter of interest and a resume to the National Audubon Society, 613 Riversville Road, Greenwich, CT 06831 or call (203) 869-5272 and speak to the Registrar.

The Value of Interpretation

By Wayne Breece
PERS Training Officer

A cold north wind blew across a valley sprinkled with sagebrush and pine. At the edge of a slow meandering stream a moose stood grazing on plants. Miles from civilization, this wilderness in Yellowstone National Park has remained nearly unchanged for over one hundred and fifty years. Thanks to the forethought of early conservationists who prompted Congress to preserve this land, the grizzly bear, coyote, bison and wolf still roam this untethered landscape much as they have for centuries. Despite the success of Yellowstone, the National Park Service is coming under increasing pressure to compromise their conservation ethics. Across the country, parks are forced to evaluate priorities and consider innovative fund-raising methods to survive.

California State Parks are no exception. Recent budget deficits have prompted the Department of Parks and Recreation to scrutinize every aspect of operations and to look for ways to increase efficiency. Even basic tenets of the park system can be questioned: Is interpretation really critical to California State Parks? Buildings continue to deteriorate and crime is a chronic problem. Why not invest funds in programs that will produce measurable results like maintenance or law enforcement? According to a 1996 California State Park survey, safety is of higher concern to our visitors than interpretation. If interpretation is not as high a priority to our customers as law enforcement, why not invest funds in improving park security?

To answer those questions, consider Yellowstone National Park. Yellowstone is known for its geysers, heavy visitation and bears. From a resource management and public relations standpoint it has been a nightmare. Early in the history of the nation's first national park, the wolf was eliminated and the resources were threatened by poaching. Early park visitors trampled geysers and began a tradition of feeding the bears. Soon the park became famous as a place to feed bears. Park officials even encouraged this behavior by building bleachers for visitors to sit and watch the bears eat garbage staff had dumped for them. Visitor contacts with bears often proved to be disastrous for both parties. People were sometimes mauled and later the bears were taken out of the park or destroyed.

Resource management problems continued over time. Visitors began to dump cans, bottles and other paraphernalia into geysers to see what would happen. Some of the geysers are less active as a result. Eight years ago, a huge fire spread through the park, destroying one-third of the vegetation. The National Park Service was heavily criticized for not stopping the fire sooner. Despite these management problems, Yellowstone has not only maintained a positive public image, but it also has changed visitor behavior, an amazing feat all by itself. How has Yellowstone National Park been able to manage these huge resource management problems?

A wise person learns from others and California State Parks can certainly learn from the mistakes and successes of our cousins — the National Park Service.

Yellowstone National Park has effectively employed interpretation to educate visitors and enlist them in solving some of the park's problems. Interpretive programs and management philosophy at Yellowstone have progressed since the early days of bear-feeding programs. Today, visitors no longer feed bears and thanks to an effective information program, there are very few bear-human contacts. Staff are proud to report that less than one percent of the visitors now have a negative bear incident. Yellowstone's interpreters employed three interpretive strategies to solve resource management problems and enlist public support.

1. Experienced Interpreters Give the Programs Credibility

Yellowstone is a popular place to work and has the advantage of being able to select from the best interpret-

ers in the country. The interpreters tend to be seasoned, knowledgeable presenters. Their programs were well rehearsed and professionally presented. Many of the interpreters were retired teachers or biologists who demonstrated credibility and aplomb. They were always well dressed and prepared for public contact. Emphasis on quality paid off for the National Park Service. Interpreters were not only able to answer the standard questions about maps, bathrooms and campground rules, but they also effectively answered natural science questions.

2. Preserving the Resources Is an Interpretive Theme Applied throughout Yellowstone

Each section of Yellowstone has a unique natural feature to interpret, but staff consistently wove natural resource management issues into their presentations. For example, at Yellowstone Lake, interpreters explained how the park is recovering from the fire. In Mammoth, interpreters talked about the decline of the buffalo in the winter. At the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, interpreters persuaded visitors to avoid the bears. These presentations were compelling because visitors could see the results of resource management strategies. Campers clearly understood that leaving food out in the campgrounds would encourage bears to rummage through their belongings. Hikers were convinced they needed to stay away from the moose and bison. Geyser lovers could see the garbage hauled out of the steaming earth. Interpretation was used to educate visitors about the value of these natural resources and it changed their behavior. Visitors still clogged the roadways to take pictures of a grizzly, but they did not approach the animal.

3. Naturalists Are Candid about Mistakes the National Park Service Has Made.

Yellowstone has long been plagued by resource management problems. Early in the park's history, the wolf was eliminated (they were re-introduced to the park a few years ago), bears were fed in interpretive programs and geysers were used as steam baths. And resource management problems continue today. Last year, half of the Yellowstone bison herd was killed when animals stepped across park boundaries onto private ranches. But the park interpreters candidly presented the facts about these problems. They did not dwell on the mistakes, but the facts did help visitors understand why certain resource management policies were enforced so rigidly.

Admitting your resource management mistakes may appear to be a poor political move, but instead it gave the interpretive programs credibility. It would be difficult to imagine one-third of Yellowstone National Park burned by fire and not believe it should have been managed differently. Interpreters said, "The National Park Service will be acting on fires sooner. They will not let every fire burn out on its own." That may not seem like much of a concession, but when visitors see thousands of acres of blackened forest every where they drive, they demand an explanation. Visitors are fairly forgiving of mistakes when they see that measures are taken to solve the problem.

Yellowstone has been a resource management nightmare. Visitors are well aware of the crowding, the bear problems and damage from the fire before they arrive. Despite this, three million people still pour through Yellowstone annually. It receives tremendous public support which has in turn engendered financial relief from Congress. What has made the difference? Interpretation. It is one of the most powerful tools we have for creating an understanding of our mission. Through interpretation we engage the public as powerful allies in our fight for funding, resource management assistance and crowd control..

A wise person learns from others, and California State Parks can certainly learn from the mistakes and successes of our cousins — the National Park Service. Interpretation is perhaps our most powerful marketing tool because satisfied customers return and they tell friends and family how much they enjoyed their experience.

Should we cut back on interpretation? No, in fact, we need to be more proactive in our interpretive programs. With our current budgeting challenges, we need to be sure to resist knee-jerk reactions that would eliminate ways to keep our public's attention and interest. We need to employ the best interpreters we can find to help our guests understand and appreciate the value of the resources we are fighting to preserve.

Universal Accessibility

By Linda McDonald
S.P. Interpreter II

As accessibility coordinator for interpretive programs in California State Parks, I attended the NAI Workshop with a top priority -- to tap into the current trends in interpretation for people with disabilities. I was not disappointed.

Monday, November 10th began with a keynote speech by Bill Lewis, Ph.D., author of *Interpreting for Park Visitors* and 1988 NAI Fellow Award recipient. I was looking forward to his speech after recently studying his videotape, *The Process of Interpretive Critiquing*. He had impressed me as a wonderful communicator and an excellent interpreter.

That morning he prefaced his speech by explaining his reservations about being a keynote speaker. He felt concerned because his eyesight has been failing. He noted that he, like 25% of people over the age of 65, was experiencing ocular degeneration. I was touched to hear him explain to his hundreds of friends and acquaintances that if he didn't seem to recognize them in the hall, they should not think he was ignoring them, but understand that he can't see them. And by all means, they should say "hello." Dr. Lewis went on to give his speech and the only indication of his sight loss came when he occasionally spent a little extra time with his note cards.

Immediately after the keynote speech, I attended a workshop session entitled, *Cher, FDR, and Radar Visit Your Park*. The workshop was conducted by Shirley Beccue and Deborah Wade of Acadia National Park. This two-hour session was packed with exactly the kind of information I was looking for.

The title was a clever way to highlight famous people with hidden disabilities. Cher has dyslexia, FDR had mobility impairment, and Radar (Gary Burghoff) has a physical birth defect. We were reminded that any visitor, famous or not, could have special needs. We started the workshop with a fun ice breaker that was geared to increase our sensitivity to people with disabilities.

The session continued with a group problem solving activity and an exercise to explore the accessibility of our individual park units. Shirley presented an outline on the history of people with disabilities and how they have been treated in society. One of the current trends in the field is "Universal Access" or "Universal Design." This concept incorporates the needs of the people with disabilities but also includes older adults (like Bill Lewis) and people with limited English proficiency, all of whom benefit from barrier-free site design and accessible interpretive programs. (Note: These groups were also included in *All Visitors Welcome*, the handbook for accessible interpretation in California State Parks, published in 1994.)

We viewed portions of a video entitled *Part of Your General Public is Disabled*, produced by the Smithsonian Institute. This twenty-minute video shows live interpreters demonstrating simple techniques for accessible interpretation. To order the video, call Beth Zebarth at the Smithsonian Institute (202) 786-2942. If you leave your name, address and phone number, she will send the video and invoice you for $29.95.

> ***Universal Access incorporates the needs of the people with disabilities but also includes older adults and people with limited English proficiency.***

The second accessibility workshop I attended was entitled *Inexpensively Increasing Visitor Center Accessibility*. Instructor Chris Judson from Bandalier National Monument shared many ideas for parks on a budget. At Bandalier, the visitor center is located near a popular hiking trail, which has been made accessible. For visitors who do not choose to hike, a photo album was compiled to give them a chance to see the

highlights. Over time the photo album was enhanced to show photos of the backcountry, the park in various seasons, and plants to watch out for, such as stinging nettle and poison ivy. What started out as an accomodation for people with disabilities is now an interpretive tool used by a wide variety of park visitors.

The main trail hike at Bandalier is enhanced by a guidebook featuring numbered points of interest. The guidebook costs $1. If a visitor would prefer a large-print version, they can borrow a full-color copy enlarged 200% and kept in a protective binder. This copy cost about $10 for color copying and visitors leave a $1 refundable deposit when they borrow it.

Chris brought her story to life by showing slides of Bandalier and the inexpensive improvements that have been implemented. The majority of the museum collection in the visitor center is exhibited behind glass. In an effort to provide a better experience for the visually-impaired, the staff created a touch table of reproduction artifacts. As you might expect, touching the artifacts is popular for all visitors, especially children.

At Bandalier, annual special event planning includes hiring a sign language interpreter for the day. The visitor center slide show has been captioned, which not only helps people with hearing impairment, but also people with limited English proficiency. This was yet another example of an accessibility-related improvement yielding multiple benefits.

At the NAI Workshop Linda got to share ideas and enthusiasm with fellow interpreters from around the country along with other DPR folks like Joanie Cahill.

Universal Accessibility reinforces positive outcomes for the entire visitor audience. Whether adding hands-on exhibits, a photo album or captions to an audio-visual program, improving accessibility really means improving the quality of interpretive programs for everyone.

As I had anticipated, the NAI Workshop allowed me to tap into current trends and gave me some great tools and resources. Besides the boost for my own career needs, I got to share in the enthusiasm of fellow interpreters from around the country. Now I'm already looking forward to this year's workshop in Anchorage!

Come by plane,
by boat,
by car,
by dogsled . . .
Get there any way you can!

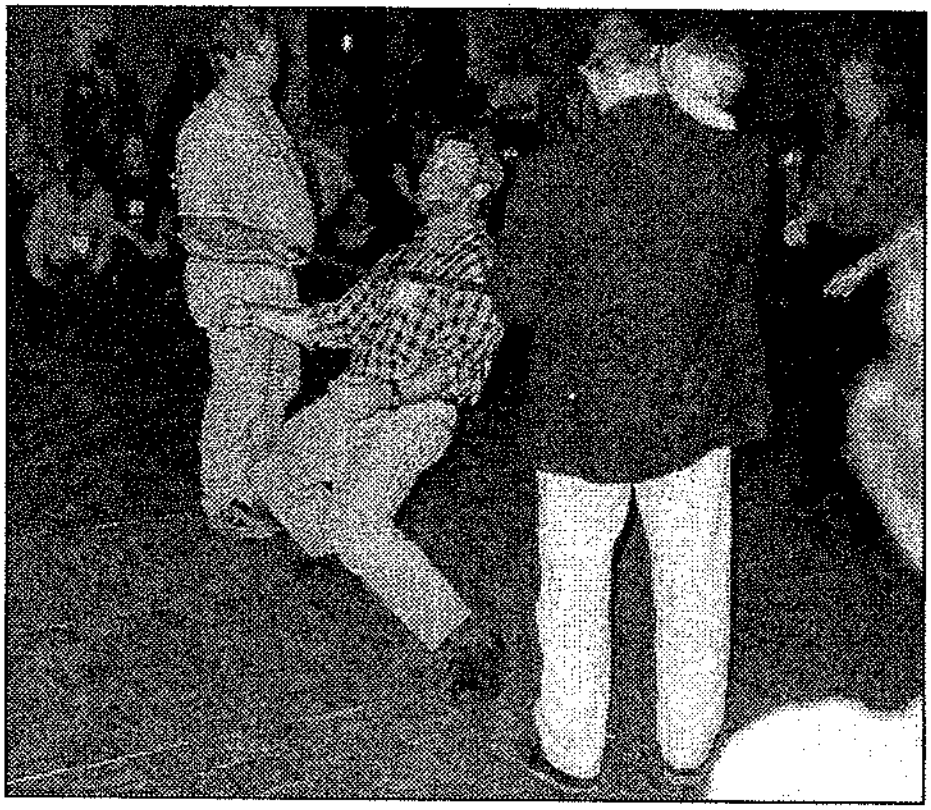
You don't want to miss the 1998 National Interpreters Workshop!
(888)900-8283

DPR Guide Wins Interpretive Award

Christine Revelas, a guide at Monterey State Historic Park, won the 1997 Excellence in Interpretation Award given by the National Association for Interpretation.

The Award recognizes her outstanding abilities as a frontline interpreter. Through the Excellence in Interpretation Award, NAI recognized Revelas' demonstrated lifelong excellence in the practice of field interpretation. "Christine is an extraordinarily talented interpreter," says NAI Executive Director Tim Merriman, "and she is very deserving of this special recognition."

Pictured beside Christine is her husband Jim Covel of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, who won the 1997 NAI Fellow Award, the association's highest honor.



The awards banquet and dance capped off an outstanding week. In order to properly celebrate Christine's accomplishment, the rest of the DPR interpreters in attendance partied as hard as they could. Bill Lindemann of Sierra District showed he is quite accomplished at the limbo! (although they didn't give him any award for it!)

Each year the NAI workshop puts together the absolute best interpretive training along with a whole lot of fun.

Next year we'll "Rush to Alaska" at the end of October. We'll learn more new stuff, share neat ideas and have a great time. Why not join us?

California's Tapestry
A Section of *The Catalyst* Office of Community Involvement Issue #8 - Spring '98

Using The Appropriate Words

By Jack Shu

Did Columbus "discover" America or did he "land" on some islands unknown to Europeans while looking for a new way to reach India? Are we "celebrating" or "commemorating" the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill? Choosing which term to use can completely change how someone perceives an event. In the two examples above, the difference means more than whether we respect the views of indigenous people or not. It gives us an opportunity to take away a judgment of whether an event was good or bad, allowing a listener to draw his or her own conclusion.

Usually, when dealing with different cultures, this issue of choosing the right words is important because we do not want to offend anyone or say something we do not mean. In the book *Multicultural Manners: New Rules of Etiquette for a Changing Society* by Norine Dresser, hundreds of examples of miscommunications due to cultural differences are given. The situations she tells of are mainly from her experiences as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language (ESL) classes in Los Angeles. Consequently, they are of cultural misunderstandings involving recent immigrants.

What the book does not cover are misunderstandings involving Californians who may have been here for generations. However, the book is still a great resource. The chapter on communications covers everything from body language to verbal expressions. It is easy for someone to read this book and become overwhelmed by the number of cultures we have to be familiar with in California.

As interpreters, we need to do more than avoid offending someone. We need to do more than make sure we are communicating well. We need to inspire people to think critically, to look at history and issues from different perspectives. Choosing the right words will not only keep communication lines open, it can help open new passages.

An African American leader commenting on "political correctness" said that it's all about power. For a group that has little influence, the use of certain words can provide them tremendous strength. For example: when Negroes said they were Blacks, the term gave a new identity to millions and started the "black is beautiful" movement. More recently, the change to African American reminds us that most us are from other continents, i.e. European American, Asian American etc.

A change in terms provides different perspectives and a new realization. As the need for social change continues, these words will probably change again in the near future.

Interpreters may not be into acquiring power. However, though we are a very small group of professionals, by being proactive when it comes to choosing words in our programs we can have a significant effect. So, is it an old Joss House, or an on-going symbol of the spirituality of early Chinese Californians? Were the missions the first series of hamlets in unsettled California or the first series of religious encampments in California Indian territory? Can you think of any changes in word(s) in your next program that will get people to look at things differently?

Submit articles and comments to: Jack K. Shu, Park Superintendent, OCI- Southern California, c/o Southern Service Center, 8885 Rio San Diego Drive, San Diego 92108, Ph# (619) 220-5330

Catalyst Spring 1998 Contents

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